



Evaluating the North East and North Cumbria NHS Staff Tobacco Dependency Offer

August 2024



Who is this evidence useful for?

Service users and members of the public.

Quick-read summary

A tobacco dependency service was offered for NHS staff working within the North East and North Cumbria.

The service provided Behavioural Support from a trained stop smoking advisor, 12 weeks free Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT) (including access to a vape), and free access to support through the SmokeFree app.

Researchers evaluated the North East and North Cumbria NHS Staff Tobacco Dependency Offer. They surveyed and interviewed NHS staff who engaged with the service to find out their views, perspectives, and experiences of this.

The evaluation found that the service was well-received by staff. It also suggested ways to improve smoking cessation services for NHS staff in the future.

What did the research find?

Access

NHS staff, once familiar with the service, found accessing the service easy, and this was seen as a motivating factor for engaging with the service.

Options

NHS staff were satisfied with the options of NRT available for them, reporting an ability to access their desired form of NRT. Staff also found the service for ordering replaceable liquid for vapes, easy to navigate and reported fast delivery.

Devices

Some reported technical issues with the vape offered. However, participants suggested that the vape was a good starting point, with the free vape being a strong motivation to begin a quit smoking journey.

Communication

Staff reported good communication with stop smoking advisors, with regular contact being something that facilitated successful quits. Some suggested that they would have benefitted from more contact with advisors, and options for how they were contacted e.g., face-to-face, telephone, or video calling.

Recommendations - overview

Service promotion

Stop smoking services should be accessible to NHS staff across different settings.

Use advertising including posters/word-of-mouth for front-line staff/routine and manual workers. Use email/trust intranet pages for office-based workers.

User engagement

Create an in-person environment to allow users to meet other staff accessing the service, and create peer networks for support.

Offer service users the scope to pre-book appointments with advisors and tailor appointments to the service user needs, e.g., private rooms, calls or video calls.

Training

Improve the frequency/quality of training for support staff. Provide staff with up-to-date knowledge on the known effects/benefits of vaping vs smoking.

Provide stop smoking advisors with knowledge of the available vape options, and information about how to troubleshoot issues with vapes.

Service quality and evaluation

Create a space for staff to provide service feedback, make regular improvements, where possible.

Why is this important?

This research highlights service user's experiences of the Staff Tobacco Dependency Offer to NHS staff and provides recommendations to build upon the service. It also provides recommendations to improve smoking cessation support that is available for NHS staff.

Read more, including the full recommendations, at: www.arc-nenc.nihr.ac.uk/evidence/STDO24/